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VIII.—*Itinerary from Tehrán to Alamút and Khurrem-ábád in*

May, 1837. By Lieut.-Col. JUSTUS SHIEL, serving in Persia.

MAY 19, 1837.—Marched from Tehrán to Kend, a large village about 10 miles N.W. of Tehrán, close to the range of El-burz, and near to which is a pass over the mountains into the district of Shehristánek.

May 20.—W. by S., 16 miles to Kerej or Suleimáníyeh. The road was over an undulating, barren, stony plain, near to the foot of El-burz. At half a mile crossed the Kend stream, flowing from north; at 2 miles the peak of Demávend bore N. 73° E.*; the pass over El-burz was 2 miles to our right; at 12 miles Demávend still bore E. by N. $\frac{1}{2}$ N., the hill above Reï E.S.E. At 16 miles crossed the Kerej stream, flowing from north, and which is afterwards lost in the Kevir or salt desert south of Tehrán.

May 21.—Left Suleimáníyeh or Kerej, and proceeded to Fúshend, 27 miles. At Kerej the village of Hájí-ábád, in El-burz, bore N. 10° W., distant 3 miles; Senger-ábád, village on Kazvín road, N. 70° W., 12 miles; the mountains above Kinari-gird, the first day's march from Tehrán to Kúm, bore from S. 11° E. to S. 16° E. The general direction of the road for 8 miles was N.W. $\frac{1}{2}$ W.; then for 7 miles N. 30° W.; and the remainder N. 35° W. At the third mile from Kerej the road to Kazvín turned off N. 63° W.; at fourth mile, village of Imám-zádeh was half a mile to our left; at thirteenth mile we passed close to the village of Kurdán on our right; and at 16 miles the village of Chendár was 1 mile on our left; at 27 miles, reached Fúshend, a large village close under the range of El-burz. The plain we travelled over to-day contained many villages.

May 22.—Left Fúshend for Mír, 27 miles; the first 4 miles the direction was N. 40° W.; then 3 miles N.; then 2 miles N. 45° W.; and the remaining 18 miles by a winding road, in the general direction of west. Immediately on leaving Fúshend we entered a defile and pass through El-burz, of 6 miles in length, and then descended into the district of Tálkán, through which the Sháh-rúd, rising at the eastern extremity, flows from E. to W.; at 10 miles we passed close to the village of Fúshendek, and then descended to the Sháh-rúd, down the left bank of which we proceeded until opposite to the village of Shehreser, when we crossed to right bank. At 21 miles passed the village of Leheren, and then, ascending a high hill, reached Mír. Tálkán is about 30 miles in length and 10 in breadth. It is fertile and populous. The western extremity of the valley is bounded by a high mountain called Yúzá, said to be 13 miles from Mír, and which bore S.W. The eastern boundary is a high mountain called Eserlik, where the Sháh-rúd rises. This river is here about 36 yards in width, with a rapid stream.

* All the bearings are magnetic, and were taken with a Kater's or prismatic compass. The variation at Tehrán in 1837 was 2° westerly.—Ed.

May 23.—Left Mír, and proceeded 10 miles to the small village of Yerek, in the district of Alamút. For 3 miles the direction was west; then 4 miles N. 60° W.; and 3 miles N. 40° W. On leaving Mír there was a very bad descent of 2 miles to the right bank of the Sháh-rúd, down which we travelled for 2 miles; at the third mile passed the village of Kúshán; at the fourth mile commenced ascending the very fatiguing pass of Dú-derán, through a chain extending north and south, and left the Sháh-rúd flowing west; at 8 miles from summit of pass saw the hilly district of Rúd-bár to the west, with the Sháh-rúd flowing through it. It is called the Sháh-rúd of Tálkán, to distinguish it from that of Alamút. Rúd-bár is bounded on the north by a high range which separates it from Gilán. From the top of the pass Yúzá mountain bore W. 17° N., and Eserlik mountain, at the eastern end of Tálkán, S.E. $\frac{1}{2}$ E. Having crossed Dú-derán, we were in the district of Alamút. Yerek is a small village at the southern foot of the Píshakúh range, which runs from east to west.

May 24.—Marched from Yerek to Gaser Khání, in Alamút, 10 miles. For 2 miles the direction was N. 45° E.; then 4 miles north; then 4 miles N. 30° E. We commenced by an ascent of 2 miles over the Píshakúh range, at the top of which Yúzá mountain, in Tálkán, bore S. 27° W., Yerek south; Selebár, a high peak at eastern extremity of Alamút, bore E. 6° N.; and Siyálán, a peak in the same quarter in which the Sháh-rúd of Alamút rises, bore N. 42° E. At the third mile we saw the village of Gaser Khání N. 29° E. At the fifth mile we passed the village of Díhek; at the seventh the village of Mahmúd-abad, and then crossed to the right bank of the Sháh-rúd river, which flows east and west, and falls into the Sháh-rúd of Tálkán. At 8 miles we passed the village of Shutur Khán. From Gaser Khání, El-burz, the name applied to a large high mountain at the extremity of Alamút, bore S. 35° E. From that village the rock of Alamút is distant 2 miles north, and said to be 8 farsakhs, or 32 miles, from Kazvín. The district of Alamút is enclosed by a high range to the north, which separates it from Gilán and Mázanderán; on the south is the Píshakúh range; on the east are El-burz and Siyálán; and on the west is Rúd-bár, and may be about 30 miles in length by 20 in breadth. The rock of Alamút stands alone; it is about two miles north of the village of Gaser Khání. The ridge is about 300 yards in length from east to west, and very narrow, not 20 yards at the top. The height is about 200 feet on all sides excepting the west, where it may be 100. It is a bare naked rock, exceedingly steep. There are no habitations in the vicinity nearer than Gaser Khání, nor are there any traces of ruins. Within a short distance of the rock there is a burying-ground. There are several remains of walls belonging to apartments at the top of the rock, besides two or three cisterns

or reservoirs for water. It must have been a place of great strength; and its capture would seem almost impossible by an army unprovided with the modern weapons of war. There are several excavations or pits in the side of the rock, which probably were used as store-rooms, as described by Von Hammer.* The vicinity of the rock is a most dreary solitude: excepting eagles and lizards, not a living thing is to be seen, nor even a single tree. The view from the summit of the rock is very fine, embracing nearly the whole of the valley of Alamút, and all the high mountains by which it is enclosed. Among them the most conspicuous is El-burz, which bore S.E. $\frac{1}{2}$ S., and Siyálán E. $\frac{1}{2}$ N., the pass through the Píshakúh range, S.W.

May 26.—Marched 12 miles to the village of Germ-rúd, in Alamút. For 2 miles the road was south; then the general direction for the remainder of the march was E. 15° S. We returned to the village of Shutur Khán, and then went up the banks of the Sháh-rúd, near to which Germ-rúd is situated; at fifth mile, Selembár mountain bore E. $\frac{1}{2}$ S.; at sixth mile passed the hamlet of Chelmír; and at eighth mile, the village of Serráj Mehelleh. We travelled through a great deal of cultivation, and near a number of villages. Germ-rúd is near the eastern end of the valley of Alamút, on right bank of Sháh-rúd, close under a steep bare range of mountains, which separate it from Mázanderán. El-burz mountain is immediately opposite to it, on the left bank of Shah-rúd.

May 27.—Left Germ-rúd, and proceeded 12 miles to Mírán, in the district of Túnákapán,† province of Mázanderán; our courses were east 1 mile, N.W. $\frac{1}{2}$ W. 3 miles, N. 20° E. 4 miles, north 2 miles, N. 25° W. 2 miles. After 1 mile we commenced ascending the very long and fatiguing pass of Germ-rúd into Mázanderán. We reached its summit at 8 miles, and found much snow. At $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles El-burz bore S. 51° W. From the top of the pass we descended continually to Mírán; nothing but hills to be seen. The Sih-hezár‡ or Mírán river rises here.

May 29.—Left Mírán, and marched 14 miles to a spot in the thicket, where we encamped. The direction was very winding, but the general course was N. 20° W. The road was through the ravine in which the Mírán or Sih-hezár river flows, and which we crossed during to-day's march twenty-five times. It enters the Caspian one mile to the north-west of Khurrem-ábád. The road was a continued descent, and was often so bad and narrow that we were obliged to unload the baggage, and have it carried by porters. At the fourth mile we entered a thick jungle of oak, beech, elm, walnut, and brushwood; at the fifth mile we passed the village of Káz Mehelleh; at night we stretched our carpets in the thicket, and halted.

* History of the Assassins, p. 70.

† Túná-*kapán*, i.e. Crane-catchers. (Turk.)

‡ Three thousand.—S.

May 30.—Left our camp, and proceeded 12 miles to the large village of *Khurrem-ábád*, in the district of *Túnikaban*. The general direction was north, through the thicket, and among hills which gradually diminished in height. At the eighth mile we saw the Caspian, and then descended some low wooded hills into the flat plain which separates the hills from the sea, and which here was three and a half or four miles in breadth. This plain was covered with thick wood, intermixed with rice cultivation, and many villages. At 8 miles a peak and cape on the shore called *Már Kúh** bore N.W. 6° W.; another cape called *Zanes* bore E. 13° S. *Khurrem-ábád* is a large village; the houses chiefly scattered through the thicket; the capital of the district of *Túnakábán*.† Salmon is abundant here in the *Mírán* river, or *Sih-hezár*, which falls into the Caspian one mile and a half from the village. The water of the sea here is not so brackish as to prevent horses from drinking it. From this spot Mount *Selembár* bore S.W. 6° S., and *Siyalán* S. $\frac{1}{2}$ W.

June 2.—Left *Khurrem-ábád*, and proceeded to *Kelár-ábád*, in *Túnikabán*, 24 miles. Marched E.S.E. for 3 miles through the thicket, and then reached the sea, along the shores of which we travelled for 19 miles in the general direction of E. $\frac{1}{2}$ S. The thick wood reached nearly to the shore. At 6 miles *Már-kúh* peak bore N. 75° W.; at sixteenth mile we passed close to the village of 'Abbás-ábád (thirty houses); and at the twenty-second mile we turned south into the forest, and arrived at *Kelár-ábád* (fifty houses).

June 3.—Left *Kelár-ábád*, and proceeded to 'Alí-ábád, in the district of *Keláristákh*, 14 miles. We returned 2 miles nearly north to the shore, close to which we continued to travel; at the twelfth mile we turned south into the thicket, and, travelling through the latter, mixed with cultivation, reached 'Alí-ábád, the principal village of *Keláristákh*. Half a mile to the eastward flows the *Chális* river, which is the boundary of the district, and separates it from that of *Kerán* or *Kujur*.

June 4.—We left 'Alí-ábád and proceeded to *Merzin-ábád*, 24 miles. The road was a continued ascent, though not abrupt, through a forest of underwood, which now began to be rather less dense; its depth from north to south seems to be about 35 miles. Our path was very winding; the general direction a little to the west of south, and up the banks of the *Chális* river or torrent. We saw no villages excepting that of *Tever*, at the twenty-second mile, on the right bank of the river.

June 5.—Proceeded from *Merzin-ábád* and encamped in the thicket at seven miles. Our course was winding, its general direction being south, with a gradual ascent up the left bank of the *Chális* river. At 1 mile, village of *Pishkhár*, 1 mile on right

* Mount *Serpent*.

† Steel Mount.

at 4 miles, village of Tewîl, 2 miles on right; cultivation more abundant, wheat and barley taking the place of rice.

June 6.—To P'nen, 16 miles. We first proceeded along the banks of the Châlis, now a mere rivulet, nearly south, for 6 miles; here a high bare peak, called Fûlâd Kûh, bore south; we then ascended a very fatiguing pass called Hezar Chesn, or "thousand twists;" in a general S.E. by S. direction for 6 miles farther, the 4 last miles were a little to the south of east; wood still abundant. The Châlis stream proceeds from mountains east of P'nen; this latter village is in the district of Kelâristâkh.

June 7.—Journeyed 14 miles to Melik fâris, a village in the district of Laurâ. We descended the mountain on which Enen is placed, and proceeding S.E., crossed the Châlis, which rises to the east. At $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles a remarkable rocky peak, 6 miles off, bore E. 16° S.; to the east of this is the district of Nûr. After crossing the Châlis we proceeded 4 miles a little to the east of south, and commenced ascending the high mountain and pass of Kildîwân; our course was south for 2 miles to the summit, and we then quitted the province of Mâzanderân and re-entered that of 'Irâk. We descended south into the district of Laurâ to the foot of Kendîwân, and entered a ravine through which the Suleïmâniyeh or Kerej river was flowing from west to east, its source being higher up the ravine to the west; south of the ravine, and quite close to it, lay a high range with snow at the top, which separated us from the plains. We proceeded down the ravine, following the course of the stream, and at the twelfth mile reached the village of Gerchek on the right bank of the river; two miles farther on brought us to Melik fâris, situated on each side of the stream. Wood had disappeared altogether soon after quitting P'nen.

June 8.—To Ehâr, 17 miles. For 6 miles the general direction was S.E. by S., then E. by S. 11 miles; at 5 miles the Kerej river, being joined by a small stream which came from N.E., turned off to W.S.W. There was considerable ascent and descent during this day's march; on our right was the ridge separating us from the plains. At the seventh mile we entered a long narrow valley covered with cultivation, and with a succession of small villages which seemed to form one large village; it was called Shehristânek or "little city."

June 9.—To Gûlchiķ,* 18 miles. We first proceeded south down the ravine, through which flows the Jâj-rûd river, and which, like that of Kerej, is lost in the salt desert to the southward. At 8 miles we ascended the last range of El-burz, from the top of which the peak of Demâvend bore N. 74° E.; Jaj-rûd river E. 34° S.; Rei, or the ruins of Rhagæ, S. 6° W.; and Tehrân S. 25° W.; from this point we descended about 9 miles to the village of Gûlchiķ, 7 miles to the north of the city of Tehrân.

* Göljiķ (Turk.) "Little Lake." S.